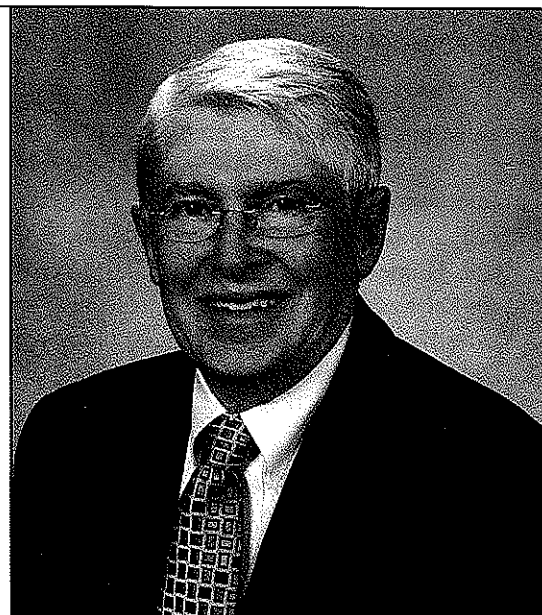


He Married the Babysitter



Michael F. Kinney

Unemployment is a scary thing. A lot of people have lost their jobs (and their livelihoods) in the recent past. Some are clients, friends, neighbors or acquaintances of us. In Nebraska, we are fortunate that our rate of unemployment is a little less than half of the national average. Nevertheless, the pain and hardship for those who are unemployed is just as real and threatening as it is anywhere else in the country.

One recent national survey reported that over half of the unemployed have had to borrow money from family or friends, almost half have experienced emotional problems such as anxiety or depression, almost half are without health insurance or health care coverage, and over a quarter have lost their home or been threatened with eviction or foreclosure. Three-fourths of the unemployed believe it is likely the unemployment benefits will run out before they find a new job.

The depth of the trauma for these millions and millions of people is better understood when you consider the fear, uncertainty and shame so many of the unemployed experience. One mother of two spoke of "saving quarters for diapers." Imagine that burden.

What can we, as lawyers, do? What should we do?

One choice we have is to contact Jean McNeil at the NSBA (402.475.7091; jmcneil@nebar.com) and offer to take on a VLP case or two. Perhaps you could forestall or prevent a foreclosure during these cold winter months. Perhaps you could prevent an unnecessary or illegal eviction or perhaps assist someone wanting only habitable living conditions. Perhaps you could locate and obtain benefits available to a destitute family they may not be aware of. Perhaps you could extricate someone

from an abusive relationship or prevent unnecessary injury. Enforcement of child support obligations can help immensely, especially for those struggling to buy diapers. Perhaps you could simply offer someone the reassurance that someone cares and will try to help.

As Nebraska attorneys, we seem to be immune from the mass layoffs experienced in the larger cities. Bar Associations in areas where there have been mass layoffs have responded by making available phone banks, e-mail addresses and regular addresses for communication with prospective employers, etc. We haven't seen the need for that in Nebraska so far. If you feel that need does exist, please let us know and we will re-examine.

In our continuing effort to acquaint you with your NSBA personnel and the programs they direct, I want to introduce you to a couple more of our stars.



Liz Neeley

LIZ NEELEY was working with the Public Policy Center of the University of Nebraska in 2001 while also a student at the University. She became involved in the Minority and Justice Task Force during that time. The Task Force released its report in 2003, after which our Supreme Court and the NSBA formed a Minority and Justice Committee. Liz became the Project Director in 2004.

The mission of the Committee is three-fold: (1) address racial disparities in both the juvenile and adult justice systems, (2) insure equal access to justice, and (3) increase the diversity of Nebraska's judicial workforces and legal profession. The

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Access to Justice subcommittee has recently addressed the growing need for interpreters as well as representative juries. Liz serves as the liaison to the Nebraska Supreme Court Interpreter Advisory Committee. The Criminal and Juvenile Justice subcommittee has recently looked into indigent defense and failure to appear issues. The Diversity subcommittee administers the LSAT Prep Scholarship Program and coordinates the Job Shadowing Program partnership with OPS and Creighton's Street Law Program.

Originally from Seward, Nebraska, Liz graduated from Doane College with a BA in Sociology in 2000, from UNL with a master's degree in Sociology in 2001, and from UNL with a Ph.D. in Sociology in 2004. She met her husband, Rob Schroeder, at a St. Patrick's Day celebration in what many argue is the Irish capital of Nebraska, O'Neill. Rob works for the Burlington Northern as a signal maintainer, but is also quite a storyteller and that's what got Liz's attention on that memorable St. Patrick's Day. They were married a year later, again on St. Patrick's Day. They are raising two boys in Seward, Sam (6) and Austin (4).

Liz loves to work on grant writing in her spare time. Her hobbies include softball, Scrabble and water skiing.

Her knowledge and assistance on Access to Justice issues has been invaluable and immeasurable. While a majority of the states are addressing racial justice issues, it is believed Nebraska is one of the most effective in doing so and that is due in large part to Liz's strong commitment and the extra time she puts into her job, including serving on the board of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness for the Courts.



Sam Clinch

Still wondering about the babysitter? Meet **SAM CLINCH**, your Associate Executive Director. Sam's older brother needed a babysitter for about a month due to a family commitment to a local play. They hired a young lady named Bobbi for the evening child care. Suddenly, Sam started hanging around his brother's house a lot, especially at night. And then, in 1988, he married Bobbi, a nurse in the cardiac cath lab at Bryan LGH. Besides working full time and raising two teenagers, Bobbi still manages to join us at many NSBA events.

As Associate Executive Director, Sam serves as the liaison to many Committees and Sections, runs the Leadership

Academy, heads up the fundraisers for our Foundation (The Nebraska Lawyers Foundation), and is also in charge of Member Benefits and Services, the Judicial Evaluation Poll, the Summer Planning Conference, the Annual Meeting, and the Bar Directory.

Somehow, he also finds ways to spend time with his and Bobbi's two children, Michael (14) and Ellie (16), attending Ellie's high school tennis matches and Michael's football and tennis events.


Sam grew up in Burwell, Nebraska where his dad was a solo practitioner and county attorney. His brother-in-law, Dale Crandall, now runs that practice and also serves as county attorney. Dale is married to Sam's older sister, Tricia. Sam also has an older brother, Steve, who is a retired cardiac surgeon in Omaha. They lost another brother, Michael, in a car accident in 1979.

Brothers Steve and Sam have participated in some pretty crazy and challenging stuff, including climbing Mount Hood and various mountains in Colorado, the Bike Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN), the Triple Bypass Bike Ride in Colorado, Spring Triathlons and Olympic Triathlons. Sam is currently training for a Half Iron Man which is a 1.2 mile swim, a 56 mile bike ride, and a half marathon run.

After graduating from Hastings College in 1984 with a BA in Business, Sam worked in banking in Denver for 2 ½ years, then Elkhorn for a couple of years, and then Hastings where Ted Dillow found him and hired him in 1989 as Executive Assistant for the NSBA. He was later promoted to Associate Executive Director.

Sam's hobbies, besides trying to kill himself with exercise, include tennis, golf and bike riding. It breaks his heart that the current President of the NSBA and the President-Elect are not avid golfers.

Sam loves his job because he learns something new all the time. He just hasn't learned how to slow down.

Go forth and be nice. 

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Michael F. Kinney".

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